CRAWLFLESH QUINTET

CREEPSHOW™

by Tim Moriarty

CREEPSHOW! A hideous-grinning skeleton briefly illuminated by a flash of lightning! A maggot-encrusted corpse shambling out of the darkness toward ...you! Moist-mawed beasties! Monsters! Mayhem!

CREEPSHOW is the result of a happy collaboration between author Stephen King and director George Romero, two honors graduates of the "when the audience is begging you to stop, give it to 'em for another half-hour" school of terror. In fact, this is what Stephen King has to say of what CREEPSHOW is all about: it's "scaring an audience so badly and so continuously that, after 105 minutes of cinema, they will have to almost literally crawl out of the theatre...a continuous scare effect ...a telegram of terror, short, and electrifying."

Cheaper than going to the dentist, anyway.

Stephen King is the author of such modern classics of horror and suspense as "Salem's Lot," "The Stand" "The Shining," "Carrie," "Firestarter," "The Dead Zone," and numerous short stories and a book of essays, "Danse Macabre."

George Romero brought you, ready or not, NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD, DAWN OF THE

An old, undated, unclaimed crate has been found in the musty basement of a testing laboratory. While the terrified janitor looks on, the crate's horrific occupant decides it wants some air...and some blood! From "The Crate" segment.

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In striving for a comic book flavor, director Romero has employed gaudy "effect" lighting. At right: Adrienne Barbeau and Hal Holbrook in "The Crate."

DEAD, MARTIN, THE CRAZIES, KNIGHTRIDERS, and a number of other films.

CREEPSHOW marks a departure for both men. Though a number of movies have been made from King's books, this is the first time his own screenplay is being used, and the first time he has worked in close contact with the production. CREEPSHOW also marks his debut as an actor.

In CREEPSHOW, George Romero has his largest budget ever (a modest $8 million), his first cast of big-name stars (E.G. Marshall, Adrienne Barbeau, Leslie Nielsen, Hal Holbrook, and of course the incredibly gifted Stephen King), and is, for the first time, directing material not of his own writing.

Gaylen Ross, as Becky, the unfaithful wife, finds that her husband has had it up to here with her. At right, the sequence as it was filmed in the studio, proving once again that making horror films is no day at the beach.

In "Father's Day," Viveca Lindfors plays the eccentric Aunt Bedelia, who holds both the living and the dead in equal contempt.

CREEPSHOW opens on a note familiar to most of us: an argument between father and son over the son's reading one of those trashy horror comic books. The argument ends in a fashion familiar to most of us: a smack across the chops for the boy, and a flight out the window for the four-color funny book. It is a dark and stormy night. The camera searches for, and finds the comic. The wind riffles the pages, opens it to a story called *Father's Day*, the splash-page tableau comes to life, and the first of five CREEPSHOW stories is underway.

**Father's Day* invites us to the bitter, back-biting family gathering of the Lormers (Carrie Nye, Ed Harris, Warner Shook, Elizabeth

Top left: Stephen King as Jordy Verrill seems to be living through a nightmare Popeye might have. Bottom left: crewmembers glue on the grue.

Regan, and Viveca Lindfors), commemorating Aunt Bedelia's annual Father's Day visit to the grave of her dear departed dad (John Lormer—not very dear, and not fully departed).

**The Lonesome Death of Jody Verrill* takes us to the junk-strewn farm of a cockeyed simpleton (Stephen King) on the very night that a meteor lands on his property. Jordy hopes to cash in in a big way on his find...and cash in he does.

**The Crate* has been hidden for over 150 years in a lab building, and it is the good fortune of two professors (Hal Holbrook and Fritz Weaver) to find it. When Holbrook's shrewish wife (Adrienne Barbeau) intervenes, complications —and a horrible beastie—arise!

**Something to Tide You Over* is an overwhelming drama of an executive (Leslie Nielsen) who buries his cheating wife (Gaylen Ross) and her lover (Ted Danson) up to their necks in the sand outside his beach house in an attempt to drown his sorrows...but finds that his plan won't wash.

**They're Creeping Up on You* is the hair-raising account of a bully-

In "Something to Tide You Over," Gaylen Ross returns from the Other Side to complain to her husband: it's impossible to get good kelp nowadays.

The ill-fated lovers of "Something to Tide You Over" pause to admire a cute little fishy before torturing the man who brought them to their wretched state.

ing boss (E.G. Marshall) who discovers, in the course of a ghostly power blackout, that he may be able to tyrannize men...but he can't rule Mother Nature.

The film's closing segment returns us to the house of the offending, comic-reading son and the short-tempered father, for a further demonstration of how folks resolve their differences in the world of horror films.

The device of framing the segments in a flipping comic book is an apt one. The creators have acknowledged their debt to the old EC Comics, which inspired their approach to creating a film that packs as many scares per sequence as possible. CREEPSHOW has been filmed by cinematographer Michael Gornick and designed by Cletus Anderson to reflect the comic book look: high-contrast, gaudy, stylized lighting, graphic gimmicks such as flashes and explosions, and the use of borders around some of the live action.

More importantly, author King, in close collaboration with director Romero, wrote as economically as possible, driving each story toward jeopardy and suspense as quickly as possible, without sacrificing all-important, sturdy characterization. Fans of the old EC Comics will recognize this headlong rush toward horror.

In charge of the makeup special effects is the legendary Tom Savini, the Mad Hatter of Splatter. Savini claims to be quite happy to be drifting away from mere bloodletting for his work on CREEPSHOW. For this one, he is creating mechanical monsters and devices.

One of Savini's "monsters" is deliberately reminiscent of the ghost-like, host-like "Thing in the Crypt" from old EC...a decrepit, hooded skeletal creature that points us the way to terror. But Savini's masterpiece is the creature that's discovered in The Crate...a slavering, razor-toothed, dagger-clawed, froth-muzzled nightmare that's sure to cause theater seats across the land to be moistened and hastily abandoned.

Tom Savini, George Romero, and Stephen King...three modern masters of horror bound and determined to give us a CREEPSHOW ...a mighty Poe showing indeed.

END

CREEPSHOW, written by Stephen King and directed by George A. Romero, is a horror film in the grand tradition of the old EC comics...full of eccentric characters, monsters, betrayal, revenge, and sudden death!